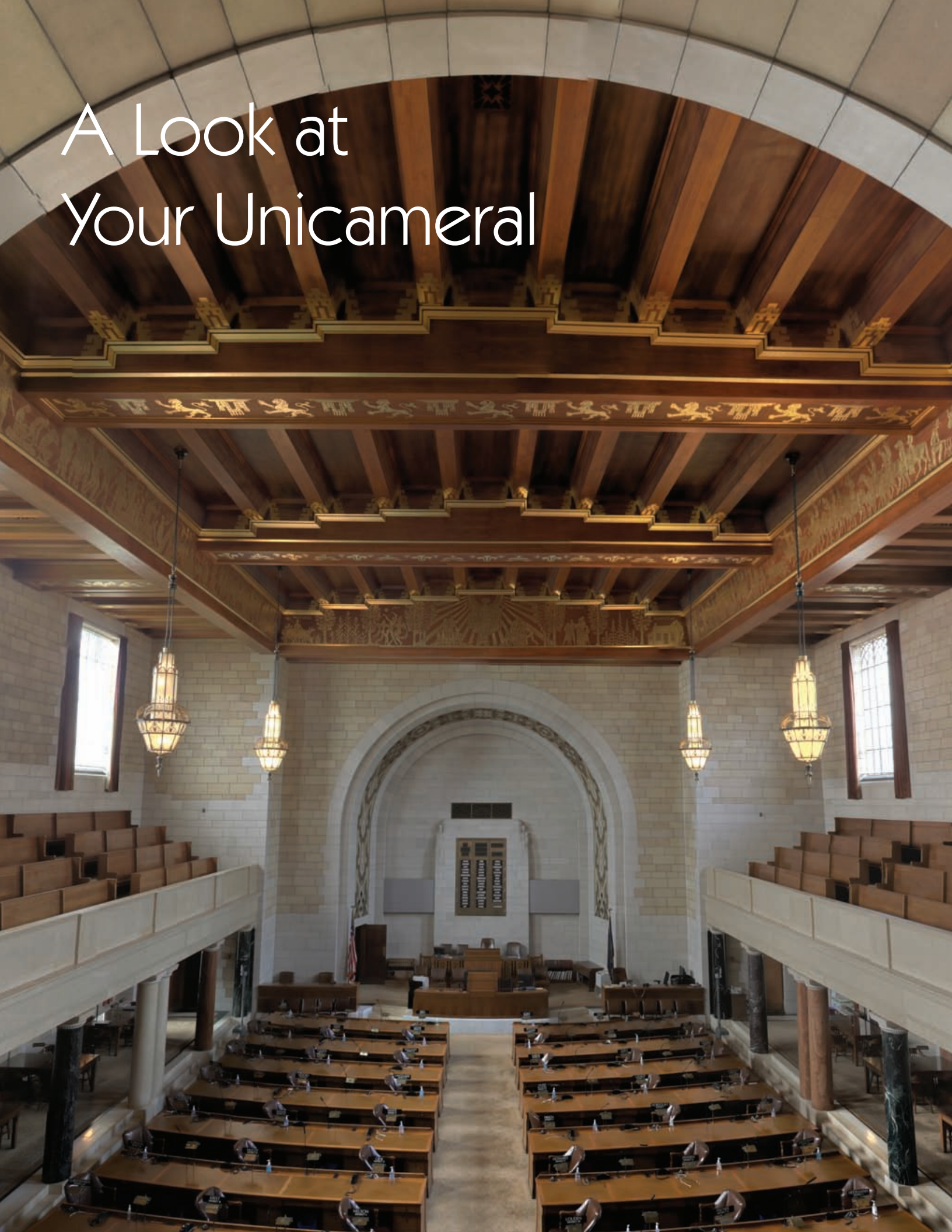


A Look at Your Unicameral



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History of a Unicameral

“There is no more reason for a two-house legislature in any of our states than there is for a bank to have two boards of directors or for a city to have two separate boards of aldermen. Indeed there is no more use for a two-branch legislature than there is for two governors.”

— George Norris, founder
of Unicameralism

Nebraska’s legislature is unique among all state legislatures in the country because it has a single house. It wasn’t always a unicameral, however. The state had a senate and a house of representatives for 68 years before Nebraskans voted to eliminate half of their state legislature in 1934.

The change to a unicameral did not come easily. Nebraskans rejected similar proposals several times before interest in reining in state spending heightened due to the Great Depression. The cause was also helped by a zealous petition campaign led by the prestigious U.S. Sen. George W. Norris and the fact that two other popular proposals were on the ballot that year: a local option on prohibition and legalized pari-mutuel betting. The vote was 286,086 for and 193,152 against a unicameral system.

George Norris

Norris, a “New Deal Republican” who settled in McCook, wore out two sets of automobile tires while he drove throughout the state campaigning for the measure. He said the two-house system was outdated, inefficient and unnecessary.

Norris said the bicameral system was modeled after the British Parliament, which is made up of the House of Commons, with representatives elected by the people, and the House of Lords, with its aristocratic members appointed by the king or queen.



“... The constitutions of our various states are built upon the idea that there is but one class. If this be true, there is no sense or reason in having the same thing done twice, especially if it is to be done by two bodies of men elected in the same way and having the same jurisdiction,” Norris said.

The one-house system differs little from most city, county and school district governing bodies. All Canadian provinces operate with single-house systems.

Immediate results

Implementation of the unicameral legislature in 1937 cut government costs for obvious reasons. Legislative membership went from 133 in the bicameral to 43 in the new single house – nearly a 70 percent reduction.

Also, the one-house system was more efficient than its predecessor. The number of committees was pared down from 61 to 18, and 581 bills were introduced in 1937, as opposed to twice that many the previous session. The last bicameral session in 1935 ran 110 days, passed 192 bills and cost \$202,593. The first unicameral session two years later ran 98 days, passed 214 bills and cost \$103,445.

Checks and balances

A common question raised during the consideration of a unicameral legislature was how to preserve checks and balances to prevent abuse of power. Norris argued there would be checks and balances without a second house. The Supreme Court and the governor would rule on or veto measures deemed improper, he said.

More importantly, the people would serve as a check upon the possible abuse of power by their elected officials with the right to vote and petition, Norris said. The Nebraska Unicameral would have easy-to-follow procedures and extend greater privileges to the press to allow for greater public awareness.

“Every act of the legislature and every act of each individual must be transacted in the spotlight of publicity,” Norris said.

No conference committee

In a one-house legislature, Norris said, no actions could be concealed as was commonly done in the conference committees of bicameral legislatures. Conference committees resolve differences when bills passed in both houses vary in content. In Nebraska, the appointed six-member committee met in secret, and members’ votes were

not public record. Norris said these committees had too much power and could be influenced easily by lobbyists.

Once a bill came out of the conference committee, it could not be changed, only approved or rejected. If rejected, another committee had to be formed to work out the disagreements, or the measure failed. Today, lawmakers may propose amendments and debate them outside of committee on the chamber floor.

Some say that the conference committees of the two-house system prevent hasty legislation. But the unicameral system has safeguards against this possibility. With few exceptions, bills must have public hearings; five days must elapse between a bill's introduction and its passage; and bills can contain only one subject.

Nonpartisanship

Another unique aspect of Nebraska's legislature is its nonpartisanship, which was included in the successful 1934 unicameral amendment. A nonpartisan body allows senators to concentrate on local interests without being influenced by national party directives. National party lines, Norris argued, often have little to do with local government. A voter who votes according to party lines may vote for a state candidate who disagrees with him or her on matters over which the senator will have jurisdiction.

Norris worked to eliminate partisanship in the Legislature because he believed that elected officials would stand on their own records. Nonpartisanship would allow lawmakers to base their actions on their own convictions and the needs of their

districts, rather than according to party dictates.

Nebraska a model

Movements for unicameralism have existed throughout the United States since the nation's independence. There were several pro-unicameral movements in the state before one finally succeeded. In 1937, the year Nebraska's unicameral legislature began operating, attempts in 21 other states to become one-house legislatures failed.

Such efforts waned until the 1960s, when a Supreme Court ruling revived the movement. The court ruled that both houses must be apportioned according to population, instead of one house according to population and the other house according to geographical lines.

The Supreme Court ruling raised doubts about the necessity of having two houses based on population, stirring many states to evaluate their own systems. Many states looked to Nebraska as a model of an effective one-house legislature. Those states included California, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee and Texas. Nebraska officials visited many states to spread the word about unicameralism. Journalists and officials from other states also visited Nebraska.

The Unicameral's first clerk, Hugo Srb, predicted that lawmakers in other states would not want to legislate their own jobs out of existence. Despite the interest unicameralism has received over the years, Nebraska remains the only state with a unicameral legislature.

The Unicameral Chamber

The George W. Norris Legislative Chamber is on the west side of the central second floor rotunda of the Capitol. Before 1937, under the bicameral system, this chamber was home to the Nebraska House of Representatives. A complete restoration of the chamber was conducted in 2008.

The double doors to the chamber are covered in hand tooled pigskin. The door design, conceived by Hildreth Meiere, depicts "The Planting of the Tree of Life." The man with a spade and the woman with a watering pot are classical Assyrian figures.

Since adopting the unicameral system, a portion of the 100 seats have been removed. The "floor" now seats 49 senators, two sergeants at arms, and a few extra seats for persons attending special occasions. The senators' desks are crafted of North American walnut.

Both balconies, with a combined seating capacity of more than 500, are fronted by a Spanish marble balustrade. This same marble accents five other varieties of Italian marble in supporting columns below.

The Bedford limestone walls are partially paneled with

Guastavino Acousty the tile. The ceiling is constructed of Nebraska walnut. The first cross beam, with Spanish lions and castles, identifies our first landowners. The second beam, with the Fleur-de-lis and Napoleonic Bees, documents the French ownership of the Nebraska territory until the Louisiana Purchase. The third beam documents our own influence with the American shield and eagle. All designs are solid gold leaf applique.

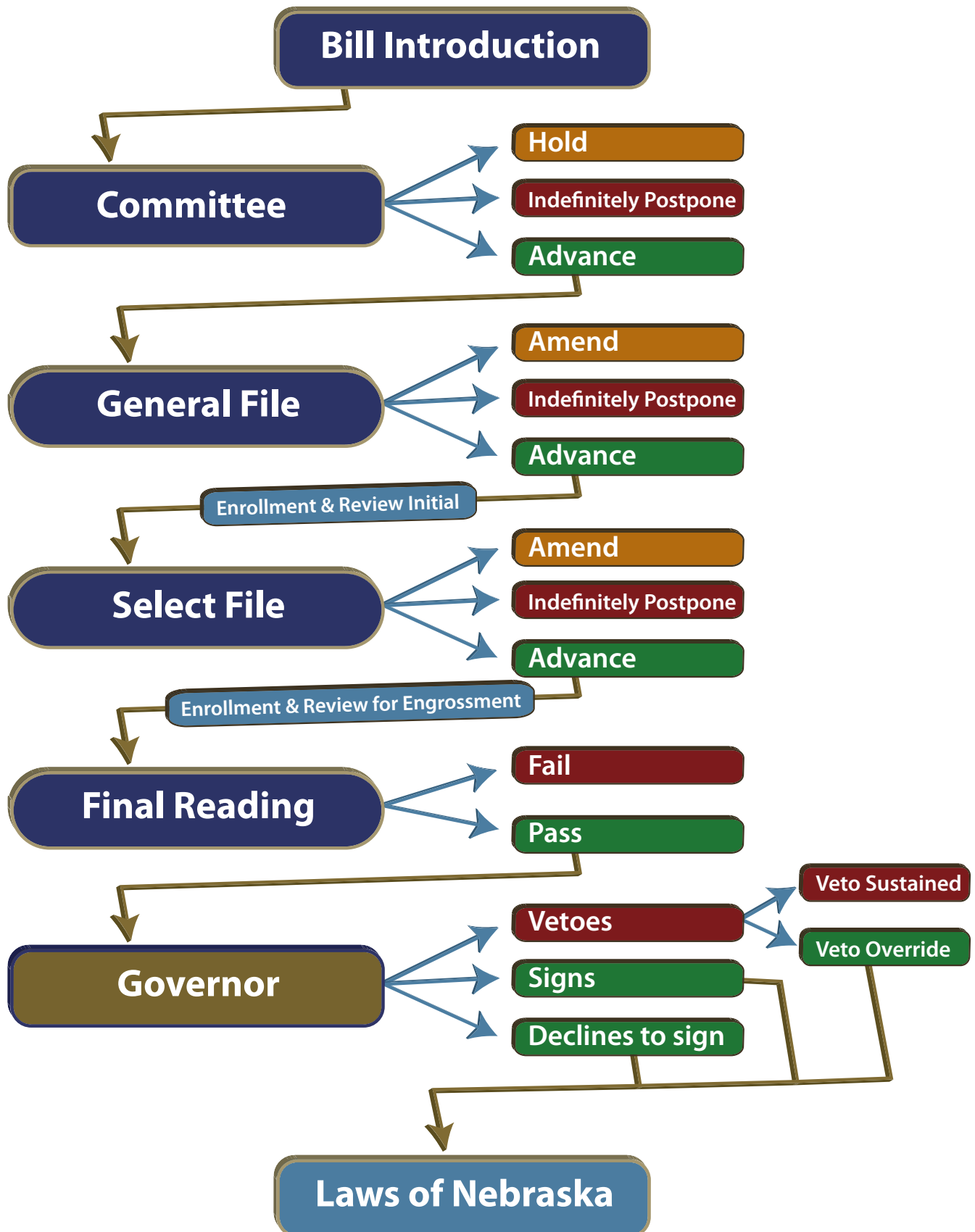
The south panel beam depicts the Lewis and Clark, Sievr DeBourgmond and Coronado expeditions. The north panel shows the U.S. survey, cattlemen and homesteaders.

The voting panel, at the front of the chamber, has been used since the building was completed in 1932. The equipment was electronically redesigned in 1970 and computerized in 1985, when large display panels that flank the voting board were installed. The panels, designed to blend with the limestone wall at the front of the chamber, tell senators which bill is being considered, who sponsors it, and the specific item under consideration. Each vote is tallied by the clerk on a computer printout.



"Why should we not divorce the business of our state from partisan matters affecting only national legislation. . ."
- George Norris

Unicameral Process





Lawmaking in the Unicameral

An idea. . .

The lawmaking process in Nebraska officially begins when a senator or a committee introduces a bill into the Legislature, which convenes each January. But the process actually begins much earlier — when a senator first begins to formulate ideas for new laws. An idea for a new law may be suggested by anyone: concerned citizens, special interest groups, state agencies or the governor. The idea must be introduced as a bill by a senator or a committee to be formally considered by the Legislature. Committees debate and propose amendments to bills, and the full Legislature has an opportunity to debate each bill at least two times before its final passage. Senators may propose amendments to alter the bill as it moves through the legislative process.

Here are the steps a bill must take before becoming a Nebraska state law:

I. Research

First, a senator and his or her staff research a problem and study possible legislative remedies. A senator may introduce a bill to create a new law or to repeal or change an existing law. Legislators have staff available to them to help with their research projects. Much of their research is done during the period between sessions called the interim. During this time, legislative committees study a variety of issues that have been outlined in interim study resolutions passed by the Legislature.

II. Drafting

A senator brings his or her idea for a new law to a bill drafter, who works with the senator to transform the idea into the proper legal form for a bill. Unlike some states, Nebraska requires that each introduced bill contain only one subject.

III. Introduction

Most bills are introduced during the first 10 days of the legislative session. In order to introduce a bill, a senator files it with the Clerk of the Legislature. The clerk

reads the title of the bill into the record, assigns it a number and prints copies of it for public and legislative use.

IV. Fiscal Note

The Legislative Fiscal Office prepares budget statements that estimate the anticipated change in state, county, or municipal expenses or revenue under the provisions of each bill. These statements are called fiscal notes. Each fiscal note contains three estimates. One estimate is calculated by the fiscal office staff; another is prepared by the governor's budget office; and a third is prepared by the affected state agency. In addition, the fiscal office prepares appropriation bills ("A" bills), which accompany bills that require an appropriation.

V. Committee Hearing

With the exception of a few technical bills, most bills introduced into the Legislature must receive a public hearing by a legislative committee. A nine-member Reference Committee determines which bills will be heard by each of the 14 standing committees. At hearings, citizens have a chance to express their opinions to committee members. Testimony is recorded, transcribed and made part of the official committee record. After the hearing, committees may vote to send a bill to General File with or without amendments, indefinitely postpone the bill or take no action on it.

VI. General File

General File is the first time the full Legislature has the opportunity to debate and vote on bills. At this stage, senators consider amendments, which may be proposed by committees or individual senators. Many people consider General File to be the most crucial stage of the legislative process because it is where most compromises are worked out through debate and amendment. It takes a majority vote of the Legislature (25 votes) to adopt amendments or move a bill from General File to the next stage of consideration.

VII. Enrollment and Review

Commonly referred to as “E&R,” enrollment and review is a process by which previously adopted amendments are incorporated into a bill, and the bill is checked for technical and grammatical accuracy.

VIII. Select File

Select File is the second debating and voting stage. This step allows another opportunity for amendment, compromise and reflection. Bills on Select File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed or advanced to the next stage. After Select File, bills are sent to E&R again to be rechecked. Then, bills are reprinted for Final Reading.

IX. Final Reading

Before final passage, bills are constitutionally required to be read aloud in their entirety by the Clerk of the Legislature, unless three-fifths (30 members) of the Legislature vote to waive the requirement.

A bill may not be amended or debated on Final Reading, but it may be returned to Select File for a specific amendment. Bills may not be voted on for final passage until at least five legislative days after the bill is introduced and one legislative day after it is placed on Final Reading.

A proposed constitutional amendment requires a three-fifths vote of the elected members (30) to place it on the

general election ballot and a four-fifths vote (40) to place it on a primary or special election ballot. All other bills without an emergency clause require a simple majority vote before going to the governor. A bill with an emergency clause (see “Effective Date” below) requires a vote of two-thirds (33 members) of the Legislature.

X. Governor

After the Legislature passes a bill on Final Reading, it goes to the governor for consideration. The governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to decide what to do with a bill. If the governor signs a bill or declines to act on it, the bill becomes a state law. The governor may veto a bill, and he or she has the authority to strike specific budget appropriations (line-item veto). The Legislature may override any gubernatorial veto, although it takes a vote of 30 senators to do so.

XI. Effective Date

Most bills passed and approved by the governor become law three calendar months after the Legislature adjourns. However, bills may take effect before that date if they contain an emergency clause or a specified operative date.

. . . becomes a law.

Legislative Divisions

I. Clerk of the Legislature

The Clerk of the Legislature, elected by the Legislature, assists in the administrative operation of the Legislature. The clerk oversees the preservation of daily floor debate, as well as the official papers and communications of the Legislature. The clerk publishes the daily and permanent Legislative Journal, compiles the Laws of Nebraska after each session, handles lobby registration, distributes bills to senators and the public, supervises sessional employees and oversees the use of legislative space.

II. Revisor of Statutes

The Revisor of Statutes is also the bill drafter. The revisor prepares all bills and most amendments and is responsible for form and craftsmanship. Following each legislative session, the Revisor of Statutes incorporates all enacted legislation into the Nebraska Statutes.

III. Legislative Fiscal Analyst

The Legislative Fiscal Analyst provides fiscal

and management information and assistance to the Legislature and the Appropriations Committee. The work involves examining the state agencies’ management and finances to improve efficiency and services.

IV. Director of Research

The Director of Research is selected by the Legislative Council to assist with legislative studies and research. In addition, the Director of Research is responsible for maintaining a reference library where a collection of materials is maintained for use by legislators and staff, and he or she conducts reviews of agencies and programs pursuant to the Legislative Performance Audit Act.

V. Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman (technically known as the Office of Public Counsel) is an independent governmental office designed to receive and investigate miscellaneous complaints relating to administrative agencies of state government.



"There is no more reason for a two-house legislature in any of our states than there is for a bank to have two boards of directors or for a city to have two separate boards of aldermen. Indeed there is no more use for a two-branch legislature than there is for two governors."
- George Norris

Members of the Nebraska Legislature

There are 49 districts represented in the Nebraska Unicameral, each containing approximately 35,000 people. Senators are elected to four-year terms and receive a salary of \$12,000 a year. Sessions begin in January each year and consist of 90 working days in odd-numbered years and 60 working days in even-numbered years. Long sessions usually last until early June, and short sessions until mid-April. Special sessions may be held at the call of the governor or two-thirds of the Legislature.

During session, a typical day for a senator could include a meeting over breakfast, a working lunch, visits with constituents, committee hearings, research, floor debate and conferences. Senators also have obligations during the interim, including contact with constituents, interim studies with committees and developing and researching bills that they plan to sponsor in the upcoming session.

A senator is called to:

- ◆ represent the people and the best interests of his or her legislative district;
- ◆ appropriate funds to further the state's progress and that of its citizens;
- ◆ protect property and persons;
- ◆ strengthen our productive capacity and create new opportunities;
- ◆ right injustices involving the public;
- ◆ keep a careful check and set policy on the operation of state government;
- ◆ keep a forum where people can be heard;
- ◆ provide a means of access for a private citizen through the maze of government;
- ◆ propose constitutional amendments to be submitted for a vote by the people;
- ◆ establish state policy by introducing bills to create and modify programs and repeal unnecessary laws;
- ◆ study problems between sessions and determine whether legislative solutions are needed to correct them; and
- ◆ exercise legislative power to the best of his or her ability.

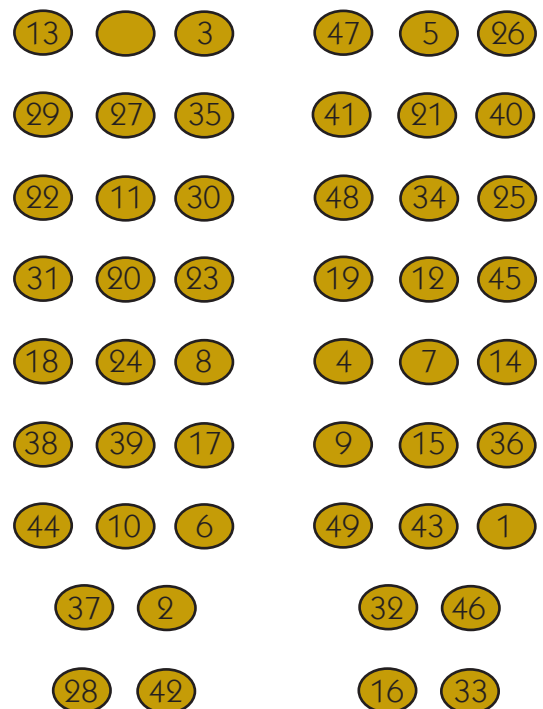
Norris Legislative Chamber Seating Chart (by district number)

Dist. Senator

1 Lavon Heidemann
2 Dave Pankonin
3 Scott Price
4 Pete Pirsch
5 Heath Mello
6 John Nelson
7 Jeremy Nordquist
8 Tom White
9 Gwen Howard
10 Bob Krist
11 Brenda Council
12 Steve Lathrop
13 Tanya Cook
14 Tim Gay
15 Charlie Janssen
16 Kent Rogert
17 Robert Giese
18 Scott Lautenbaugh
19 Mike Flood
20 Brad Ashford
21 Ken Haar
22 Arnie Stuthman
23 Chris Langemeier
24 Greg Adams
25 Kathy Campbell

Dist. Senator

26 Amanda McGill
27 Colby Coash
28 Bill Avery
29 Tony Fulton
30 Norm Wallman
31 Rich Pahls
32 Russ Karpisek
33 Dennis Utter
34 Annette Dubas
35 Mike Gloor
36 John Wightman
37 Galen Hadley
38 Tom Carlson
39 Beau McCoy
40 M.L. Dierks
41 Kate Sullivan
42 Tom Hansen
43 Deb Fischer
44 Mark Christensen
45 Abbie Cornett
46 Danielle Conrad
47 Ken Schilz
48 John Harms
49 LeRoy Louden



2010 Nebraska State Senators



Sen. Greg L. Adams
(District 24, York)
Mailing Address: District 24, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2756
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Retired teacher



Sen. Mark R. Christensen
(District 44, Imperial)
Mailing Address: District 44, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2805
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Commodity broker, landowner



Sen. Brad Ashford
(District 20, Omaha)
Mailing Address: District 20, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2622
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 1986, 1990, 2006
Occupation: Attorney, businessman



Sen. Colby Coash
(District 27, Lincoln)
Mailing Address: District 27, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2632
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: Director of staff development,
Collaborative Industries, Inc.



Sen. Bill Avery
(District 28, Lincoln)
Mailing Address: District 28, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2633
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Retired professor



Sen. Danielle Conrad
(District 46, Lincoln)
Mailing Address: District 46, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2720
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Attorney



Sen. Kathy Campbell
(District 25, Lincoln)
Mailing Address: District 25, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2731
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: Executive vice president, CEDARS
Home for Children Foundation



Sen. Tanya Cook
(District 13, Omaha)
Mailing Address: District 13, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2727
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: President, City Girl Communications



Sen. Tom Carlson
(District 38, Holdrege)
Mailing Address: District 38, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2732
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Financial advisor



Sen. Abbie Cornett
(District 45, Bellevue)
Mailing Address: District 45, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2615
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2004
Occupation: Retired



Sen. Brenda Council
(District 11, Omaha)

Mailing Address: District 11, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2612

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: Attorney



Sen. Tim Gay
(District 14, Papillion)

Mailing Address: District 14, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2730

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006

Occupation: Investment advisor



Sen. M. L. Dierks
(District 40, Ewing)

Mailing Address: District 40, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2801

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2006

Occupation: Rancher, retired veterinarian



Sen. Robert J. Giese
(District 17, South Sioux City)

Mailing Address: District 17, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2716

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: Grocery store produce manager



Sen. Annette M. Dubas
(District 34, Fullerton)

Mailing Address: District 34, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2630

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006

Occupation: Farmer, rancher



Sen. Mike Gloor
(District 35, Grand Island)

Mailing Address: District 35, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2617

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: Retired hospital CEO



Sen. Deb Fischer
(District 43, Valentine)

Mailing Address: District 43, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2628

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2004, 2008

Occupation: Rancher



Sen. Ken Haar
(District 21, Malcolm)

Mailing Address: District 21, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2673

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: President and CEO, Compliance at a Glance, Inc.



Sen. Mike Flood
(District 19, Norfolk)

Mailing Address: District 19, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2929

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2004, 2008

Occupation: Broadcaster, lawyer



Sen. Galen Hadley
(District 37, Kearney)

Mailing Address: District 37, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2726

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: Retired professor



Sen. Tony Fulton
(District 29, Lincoln)

Mailing Address: District 29, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471-2734

Appointed to Nebraska Legislature: Jan. 3, 2007, to replace Sen. Mike Foley, who resigned

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: CEO Guardian Angels Homecare; professional engineer



Sen. Tom Hansen
(District 42, North Platte)

Mailing Address: District 42, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509, phone (402) 471- 2729

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006

Occupation: Secretary/treasurer, Hansen 77 Ranch, LLC



Sen. John N. Harms
(District 48, Scottsbluff)

Mailing Address: District 48, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2802

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006

Occupation: Retired



Sen. Chris Langemeier
(District 23, Schuyler)

Mailing Address: District 23, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2719

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2004, 2008

Occupation: Owner of Land Mark Management and
Realty, Inc., certified general real estate appraiser



Sen. Lavon Heidemann
(District 1, Elk Creek)

Mailing Address: District 1, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2733

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2004, 2008

Occupation: Farmer



Sen. Steve Lathrop
(District 12, Omaha)

Mailing Address: District 12, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2623

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006

Occupation: Attorney



Sen. Gwen Howard
(District 9, Omaha)

Mailing Address: District 9, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2723

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2004, 2008

Occupation: Social worker, adoption specialist



Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh
(District 18, Omaha)

Mailing Address: District 18, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2618

Appointed to Nebraska Legislature: Nov. 2, 2007,
to replace Sen. Mick Mines, who resigned

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: Attorney



Sen. Charlie Janssen
(District 15, Fremont)

Mailing Address: District 15, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2625

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: Chairman and CEO, RTG Medical



Sen. LeRoy J. Loudon
(District 49, Ellsworth)

Mailing Address: District 49, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2725

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2002 (by
petition), 2004, 2008

Occupation: Rancher



Sen. Russ Karpisek
(District 32, Wilber)

Mailing Address: District 32, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2711

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006

Occupation: State senator



Sen. Beau R. McCoy
(District 39, Omaha)

Mailing Address: District 39, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2885

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Occupation: Home improvement contractor,
business owner



Sen. Bob Krist
(District 10, Omaha)

Mailing Address: District 10, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2718

Appointed to Nebraska Legislature: Sept. 11, 2009,
to replace Sen. Mike Friend, who resigned

Occupation: Contract manager; chief pilot, U.S. Army
Corps of Engineers



Sen. Amanda McGill
(District 26, Lincoln)

Mailing Address: District 26, P.O. Box 94604,
Lincoln, NE 68509

Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
phone (402) 471-2610

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006

Occupation: Marketing agency account executive



Sen. Heath Mello
(District 5, Omaha)
Mailing Address: District 5, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2710
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: Community development specialist



Sen. Scott Price
(District 3, Bellevue)
Mailing Address: District 3, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2627
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: Business development manager,
 Computer Sciences Corporation



Sen. John E. Nelson
(District 6, Omaha)
Mailing Address: District 6, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2714
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Attorney



Sen. Kent Rogert
(District 16, Tekamah)
Mailing Address: District 16, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln,
 NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2728
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Farm business consultant



Sen. Jeremy J. Nordquist
(District 7, Omaha)
Mailing Address: District 7, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2721
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: State senator



Sen. Ken Schilz
(District 47, Ogallala)
Mailing Address: District 47, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2616
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: Cattle feeder/farmer



Sen. Rich Pahls
(District 31, Omaha)
Mailing Address: District 31, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2327
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2004, 2008
Occupation: Retired



Sen. Arnie Stuthman
(District 22, Platte Center)
Mailing Address: District 22, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2715
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2002, 2006
Occupation: Farmer, volunteer firefighter



Sen. Dave Pankonin
(District 2, Louisville)
Mailing Address: District 2, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2613
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Owner and president, Pankonin's, Inc.



Sen. Kate Sullivan
(District 41, Cedar Rapids)
Mailing Address: District 41, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2631
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: Banker, board of directors, Cedar
 Rapids State Bank; president, Kokes Corporation
 family farm; vice president, Bluestem Beef, Inc.



Sen. Pete Pirsch
(District 4, Omaha)
Mailing Address: District 4, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln,
 NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2621
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Attorney



Sen. Dennis Utter
(District 33, Hastings)
Mailing Address: District 33, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2712
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008
Occupation: Chairman, board of directors, Adams
 County Bank



Sen. Norm Wallman
(District 30, Cortland)
Mailing Address: District 30, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2620
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Agribusinessman



Sen. John M. Wightman
(District 36, Lexington)
Mailing Address: District 36, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2642
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Attorney, Wightman & Wightman Law
 Office



Sen. Tom White
(District 8, Omaha)
Mailing Address: District 8, P.O. Box 94604,
 Lincoln, NE 68509
Office: State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509,
 phone (402) 471-2722
Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006
Occupation: Attorney

Term Limits

In 2000, the voters of Nebraska enacted by initiative petition a limit of two consecutive four-year terms on the service of state legislators. The first election at which legislators were ineligible from continuing their service due to term limits took place in 2006. Term-limited legislators will remain ineligible to serve in the Legislature until at least four years after leaving office. (Source: Nebraska Constitution, Article III, Section 12.)

Contacting Your Senator

Citizens need personal contact with legislators, and legislators need personal contact with citizens. The Nebraska Legislature is a very people-oriented institution, says Clerk of the Legislature Patrick O'Donnell.

As a concerned citizen, there are several ways that you may communicate effectively with your senator in an attempt to suggest or influence legislation. Here are some important tips:

Identifying your senator: Check the Unicameral Web site (www.NebraskaLegislature.gov) or contact your county clerk or county election commissioner to find out what district you reside in.

Face-to-face meetings: Face-to-face meetings work well because they allow senators to put faces with names. The best way to set up a meeting with a senator is to contact his or her legislative office and work with the staff member who handles the senator's schedule. When preparing for a meeting with a legislator, remember that his or her time may be limited. Try to have your thoughts gathered ahead of time so you can communicate your needs and positions clearly and concisely.

Phone calls: Phone calls are effective because they allow for direct contact between constituents and

legislators and are often easier to schedule than face-to-face meetings. Having your thoughts prepared ahead of time is still a good idea. If it is not possible to talk directly with the legislator, communicate your thoughts to a member of the legislator's staff. Staff will see to it that your comments are forwarded to the senator.

E-mail: Most senators have public e-mail addresses available through www.NebraskaLegislature.gov. Because of the large volume of e-mail a senator's office receives, one should not expect to automatically receive a response to every message sent. It is best when contacting your senator by e-mail to treat it like a regular letter. You will have more credibility if you place your name and contact information at the bottom of the note. This also will grant the legislator the flexibility to respond either electronically or by regular mail.

Letters: Written letters are effective because they allow constituents to be complete and precise about their needs and positions. It is best to keep the letter focused on the main points you wish to make and to avoid rambling. A constructive approach to the issue is more likely to receive attention. Letters that are written by you in your own words are much more effective than form letters.

Contacting Your Senator

Capitol Mailing Address:

Nebraska Legislature
State Capitol
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Mailing Address for Senators:

Senator _____
District _____

State Capitol
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

You may find contact information for senators on pages 9-13 of this book.

Division Addresses:

Clerk of the Legislature's Office

Patrick J. O'Donnell, Clerk; Room 2018, State Capitol;
P.O. Box 94604; Lincoln, NE 68509-4604;
Phone: (402) 471-2271

Fiscal Office

Michael Calvert, Director, Legislative Fiscal Office;
P.O. Box 94604; Lincoln, NE 68509-4604;
Phone: (402) 471-2263; Fax: (402) 479-0959

Legislative Research Division

Cynthia G. Johnson, Director; Room 1201, State Capitol;
P.O. Box 94945; Lincoln, NE 68509-4945;
Phone: (402) 471-2221

Ombudsman (Public Counsel)

Marshall Lux, Ombudsman; Room 807, State Capitol;
P.O. Box 94604; Lincoln, NE 68509-4604;
Phone: (402) 471-2035 Toll Free Phone: 1-800-742-7690

Revisor of Statutes

Joanne Pepperl, Revisor of Statutes; Room 358, State Capitol; P.O. Box 94945; Lincoln, NE 68509-4945;
Phone: (402) 471-2225

The Warner Institute for Education in Democracy



The Warner Institute is a civic education project of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature. The program features a number of individual projects available to teachers and students across the state to help students understand the complexity and importance of their state's legislative process.

Named for the late state Sen. Jerome Warner, the project enables students to listen directly to senators' views on issues of representative democracy, learn about the history and government of the state of Nebraska, and participate in the democratic process. The program was designed to help students gain a greater understanding and appreciation for representative democracy and its role in our society.

To learn more about programs of the Warner Institute, contact: Unicameral Information Office, Nebraska Legislature, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509, (402) 471-2788, uio@leg.ne.gov, www.nebraskalegislature.gov/education/student_programs.php.

America's Legislators Back to School Program (all grade levels)

Throughout the year, state legislators across the country visit local classrooms to help students understand the legislative process and build links between schools and state government. America's Legislators Back to School Program, sponsored nationally by the National Conference of State Legislatures, focuses national attention on civic education.

Unicam Kids - A Student Guide to the Nebraska Legislature (grades 4-6)

This booklet is a colorful guide for young students that teaches about the membership, history and processes of the Nebraska Legislature. The Student Guide also features puzzles and quizzes designed to test a student's knowledge of the material. The publication can be found online at www.nebraskalegislature.com/UnicamKids

UniCAM Focus (grades 9-12)

UniCAM Focus uses the web and streaming video to provide teachers with lessons to use in helping students gain insight into various themes about representative democracy in our state. Each lesson is intended to supplement a teacher's civics curriculum and is accompanied by exercises and videos that help explain the broad concepts of representative government.

The Nebraska Unicameral: A Citizen's Legislature (grades 9-12)

A Citizen's Legislature is a guide to the Nebraska Unicameral designed specifically for high school students. This brochure discusses the importance of citizen participation and offers suggestions on how to become involved in the process. The guide also offers educational information on the difference between unicameral and bicameral legislatures.

Unicameral Youth Legislature (ages 14-17)

The Unicameral Youth Legislature is a four-day legislative simulation in which students take on the role of a lawmaker. Student senators sponsor bills, conduct committee hearings, debate legislation and discover the unique process of the nation's only unicameral.

Legislative activities are conducted at the Nebraska State Capitol Building in the historic Warner Chamber, which was

home to the Nebraska Senate until the state consolidated to a one-house legislature in 1937.

The youth legislature is organized by University of Nebraska 4-H and has been supported by AmeriCorp VISTA, the Nebraska Cooperative Extension and the Southeast Research and Extension Center. The Clerk of the Nebraska Legislature, through the Unicameral Information Office, serves as a technical consultant for the youth legislature.

Teacher's Guide to the Unicameral Update (all grades)

The Legislature's official news source, the Unicameral Update makes a great classroom resource. Teachers can request free, multiple subscriptions for use in the classroom, or have students log on to the Unicameral Update online at unicameralupdate.blogspot.com

The web site also includes a link to ideas for incorporating either the print or online versions of the Update into civics and government curricula under the link "Teacher's Guide."

Nebraska Blue Book Online (all ages)

The *Nebraska Blue Book*, the state's government resource manual, is available online so the public can have instant access to information about Nebraska's government and culture. Bound books also are available for purchase.

Glossary of Legislative Terms

Appropriation Bill ("A" Bill) - a bill to appropriate funds to finance another bill bearing the same number.

Act - the proper name for a bill after it is enacted into law. Also, a term used to refer to a group of laws addressing a particular subject, such as the Nebraska Affordable Housing Act.

Agenda - a daily order of legislative business set by the Speaker.

Amendment on file - an amendment of 10 or more pages, not printed separately or in the Journal, that is available in the Clerk's Office (Room 2018).

Amendment printed separate - an amendment of 10 or more pages, printed separately from the Journal, that is available in the Bill Room (Room 1104).

Attorney General's opinion - a written analysis of a question of law prepared by the attorney general for the governor, the head of an executive department or any state senator.

Biennium - the two-year period in which a single Legislature, such as the 101st Legislature, exists. Also, the two fiscal years for which a single Legislature does budget planning and makes appropriations.

Bracket - to delay consideration of a bill.

Call of the House - a procedure used to compel attendance of unexcused senators in the chamber.

Carry-Over Legislation - bills and resolutions introduced during the regular session in an odd-numbered year and held over for consideration during the regular session in an even-numbered year.

Chair - the presiding officer.

Cloture - a parliamentary action to cease debate on a bill and vote immediately on its advancement. A motion for cloture may be made after full and fair debate on a bill at any stage of consideration.

Committee on Committees - the select committee that proposes appointments of senators to other legislative committees at the beginning of each biennium.

Committee Statement - a statement indicating whether a committee voted to advance or indefinitely postpone a particular bill. It includes the roll call vote of committee members, a summary of the bill and any proposed committee amendments, and a list of who testified at the bill's hearing.

Constitutional Amendment Resolution (CA) - a proposal to amend the state constitution, ratify or reject an

amendment to the U.S. Constitution or petition Congress about amending the U.S. Constitution. State CA resolutions have the suffix “CA” by the resolution number, and they must be approved by the voters as well as the Legislature.

Consent Calendar - a portion of the agenda in which relatively noncontroversial bills are considered and quickly advanced to the next legislative stage. Usually, a bill on consent calendar can be debated for no more than 15 minutes.

Emergency Clause (“E” Clause) - a provision that allows a bill or a portion of a bill to take effect immediately after the governor signs it or after the Legislature overrides the governor’s veto.

Engrossment - the process of preparing a bill for Final Reading by incorporating all adopted amendments.

Enrollment and Review (E&R) - the process of incorporating adopted amendments into a bill and reviewing the bill for technical and grammatical accuracy.

Executive Board of the Legislative Council - a nine-member special committee that oversees legislative services, personnel and other internal affairs of the Legislature. The Executive Board also serves as the Reference Committee.

Executive Session - a closed meeting of a committee to discuss and act on bills and resolutions. An executive session is open only to committee members, staff and the media.

Final Reading - the third and last stage at which a bill is considered by the entire Legislature. The clerk reads the entire bill aloud, unless final reading is waived, and senators vote without debate on whether to submit the bill to the governor.

Fiscal Note - a statement prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office estimating the effect a bill would have on state and/or local expenditures and revenue.

Floor - the area of the legislative chamber where the senators sit. When a committee advances a bill “to the floor,” that means the bill is being sent to the full Legislature for consideration.

General File - the first stage at which a bill is considered by the full Legislature. Bills on General File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed or advanced to Select File.

Germane - relevant to the specific subject of the bill being considered. Any amendment that is not germane is out of order.

Hearing - a regularly scheduled committee meeting to receive public comment on proposed bills and resolutions.

House Under Call - the term used when all unexcused senators are required to be in their seats in the chamber and unauthorized personnel must leave the floor.

Indefinitely Postpone (IPP) - to suspend all further activity on a bill or resolution.

Initiative - the power of the people, through the petition process, to enact laws and adopt constitutional amendments independently of the Legislature.

Interim - the period between legislative sessions.

Legislative Bill (LB) - a proposal to create, change or delete one or more laws.

Legislative History - the committee and floor debate records for any bill. A history includes transcripts of the bill’s hearing and all floor debate.

Legislative Journal - official record of legislative floor action, including all motions, the number of “yeas” and “nays” on each vote, etc.

Legislative Resolution (LR) - a proposal to make a formal expression of opinion, intent or recognition; amend the state or federal constitution; or authorize an interim study of an issue.

Line-Item Veto - the power of the governor to make specific reductions in any part of a budget bill passed by the Legislature.

Machine Vote - a vote taken by electronic voting system. The voting board shows how each senator voted, but only vote totals are entered in the Legislative Journal.

Major Proposal - a bill or constitutional amendment resolution that the speaker designates as important enough for scheduling priority. Each session, up to five bills may be chosen as major proposals, all of which must be senator priority bills and have the approval of two-thirds of the Executive Board.

One-liner - a one-line description of a bill or resolution.

President of the Legislature - the lieutenant governor. While senators address whoever is in the chair as Mr. or Madame President, the lieutenant governor alone holds that official title.

Presiding Officer - the president or the senator currently presiding over legislative proceedings.

Priority Bill - a bill that has priority status and generally is considered ahead of other bills in debate. Each senator may select one priority bill, each committee may select two priority bills and the speaker may select up to 25 priority bills.

Record Vote - a vote on which a record is kept of how each senator voted. The vote is taken by electronic voting system, and the senators’ names and corresponding votes are then printed in the Legislative Journal.

Reference Committee - the committee, made up of the nine Executive Board members, that refers bills, resolutions and gubernatorial appointments to other committees.

Referendum - the power of the people, through the petition process, to repeal or amend any act or part of an act of the Legislature.

Regular Session - the annual session that begins the first Wednesday after the first Monday of each January.

Revisor Bill - a bill, prepared by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, proposing a technical correction or the repeal of an obsolete statute.

Roll Call Vote - a vote during which the senators vote one at a time as the clerk reads their names. Senators cast

their votes verbally, and their names and corresponding votes are printed in the Legislative Journal.

Select Committee - a permanent committee with a subject-matter jurisdiction related to the administration of the Legislature.

Select File - the second stage at which a bill is considered by the entire Legislature. Bills on Select File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed or advanced to Final Reading.

Session - a period of time, usually a number of days, during which the Legislature meets and transacts business. See Regular Session, Special Session.

Sine Die - without setting a future date for reconvening. When the Legislature adjourns sine die, the legislative session is finished for the year.

Slip Law - a bill or constitutional amendment resolution printed individually in its approved form after being enacted into law or submitted to voters.

Speaker of the Legislature - the officer of the Legislature, elected from among the senators, who prepares the daily agenda and the session calendar and who presides in the absence of the lieutenant governor.

Special Committee - a committee created by law for a specific reason. Except for the Executive Board, special committees have no jurisdiction over bills or resolutions.

Special Session - a limited legislative session called for a specific purpose by the governor or two-thirds (33 members) of the Legislature.

Standing Committee - a permanent committee with a subject-matter jurisdiction related to an area of public policy. Almost all bills and resolutions are referred to one of the 14 standing committees.

Statement of Intent - a statement, prepared by the sponsor of a bill, that briefly describes the bill and the reasons why it is being introduced.

Summary Sheet - a daily list of all legislative activity that has taken place in one legislative day, including action taken on bills and resolutions.

Veto - the power of the governor to reject bills passed by the Legislature. The governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to either sign or veto a bill. The Legislature then has an opportunity to override the veto.

Veto Override - the power of the Legislature to pass a bill over the governor's veto. A veto override requires the approval of three-fifths (30 members) of the Legislature.

Voice Vote - a vote in which senators cast their votes orally and no totals are recorded.

Worksheet - a list, prepared daily, that indicates the status of all bills and resolutions at the end of that legislative day.

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